

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-05 IO-13 EB-08 AID-05 TRSE-00
OMB-01 COME-00 /101 W
-----090089 291713Z /50

R 291623Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8819
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 16261

DEPARTMENT PASS NEA FOR DUBS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK, PK, IN
SUBJECT: FCO BRIEFING ON SITUATION IN INDIA AND
PAKISTAN

1. FCO ACTING HEAD OF SOUTH ASIA DEPARTMENT, FIELD,
GAVE BRIEFING ON FCO ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION IN
INDIA AND PAKISTAN TO BLOOD, DCM-DESIGNATE FOR AMEMBASSY
NEW DELHI, HAGERTY, POLCOUNS-DESIGNATE FOR AMEMBASSY
ISLAMABAD, AND EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 29, AS FOLLOWS:

2. PAKISTAN. FIELD SAID THAT IN PAKISTAN ZIA HAD GOTTEN
HIMSELF INTO A TANGLE BY ABANDONING IMPARTIALITY AND
COMING OUT AGAINST BHUTTO. HE IS TRYING TO KEEP BHUTTO
OUT OF THE ELECTION OR AT LEAST TO PREVENT HIM FROM
WINNING IT. IN DOING SO ZIA IS REACTING TO EVENTS
RATHER THAN LEADING. BHUTTO APPEARS TO BE WEARING A
MARTYR'S CROWN, AND STREET SUPPORT FOR HIM IS GROWING.
THE PNA IS IN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DISARRAY. THE LONGER
THE PRESENT UNCERTAINTY GOES ON, THE MORE LIKELY BHUTTO
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IS TO BECOME A POTENT FORCE. ZIA IS CAUGHT BETWEEN HIS
OWN EARLIER PROMISES AND THE JUNIOR OFFICERS IN THE ARMY
PRESSURING HIM TO PUT BHUTTO ON TRIAL. THE LAST THREE
WEEKS HAVE WITNESSED INCREASING PRESSURES FROM THESE
JUNIOR OFFICERS, OPPORTUNISTIC ACTIONS BY BHUTTO, AND
THE FAILURE OF THE PNA TO MOUNT AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN.

3. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE FCO ESTIMATES THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR ZIA TO HOLD TO HIS TIME-TABLE OF HAVING BHUTTO TRIED AND SENTENCED BY OCTOBER 18, AND THEREFORE THE FCO THINKS THAT IT IS INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL BE FEASIBLE TO HOLD ELECTIONS BY OCTOBER 18. WHEN AND IF THE ELECTIONS ARE HELD, THE FCO WOULD BE LEERY OF PREDICTING THE OUTCOME. HOWEVER, FIELD REITERATED THAT THE PNA, THE FORMER MARTYRS, ARE NOW THE PARTY OF THE STATUS QUO, AND THE NEW MARTYR IS BHUTTO.

4. INDIA. FIELD NOTED THAT THE INDIANS NOW APPEAR TO BE SOMEWHAT COMPLACENT ABOUT PAKISTANI MILITARY POWER, AND THE NEW INDIAN REGIME HAS MADE NO EFFORT TO STIR UP TROUBLE WITH PAKISTAN. THE BRITISH WELCOME THE MOVE TOWARD MORE STABLE INDO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS. WITH REGARD TO BANGLA DESH, THE INDIANS HAVE BEEN HELPFUL ON THE PROBLEM OF CROSS-BORDER RAIDS. THE BRITISH UNDERSTAND THAT ON THE DIVISION OF WATERS THE INDIANS AND BANGLA DESHIS HAVE REACHED A SMALL AREA OF AGREEMENT, BUT ON THE BASIS OF THE LATEST REPORTS THE BRITISH ARE NOT ENCOURAGED BY THE PROSPECTS OF REACHING AN OVERALL AGREEMENT. THE INDIANS HAVE ALSO BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING AND RELAXED IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH NEPAL.

5. UK RELATIONS WITH INDIA. DESAI HAS PROVED TO BE
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VERY FRIENDLY WITH THE BRITISH, AND THE UK DESPITE ITS LIMITED LEVERAGE, HAS BEEN GETTING MUCH MORE OF A DIALOGUE GOING ON A WIDER RANGE OF PROBLEMS WITH HIS GOVERNMENT THAN WITH THE PREVIOUS INDIAN GOVERNMENT. THE INDIANS ARE NOT GOING TO ABANDON THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIETS OR THEIR POLICY OF NEUTRALISM; HOWEVER, THE UK HAS REASSERTED BRITISH AND GENERAL WESTERN INTERESTS IN INDIA AND IS DOING ALL IT CAN TO PERSUADE THE INDIANS TO BE LESS DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIET UNION. THE EC IS INDIA'S MOST IMPORTANT TRADING PARTNER, AND THE UK IS NOW CONTRIBUTING 140 MILLION POUNDS STERLING PER YEAR TO INDIA IN DEVELOPMENT AID, CONSTITUTING NEARLY 30 PER CENT OF ALL BILATERAL UK AID. THE UK HAS BEEN POINTING OUT TO THE INDIANS THAT ECONOMIC AID FROM THE WEST, PARTICULARLY IN GRANT TERMS, IS MUCH GREATER THAN WHAT THE INDIANS ARE GETTING FROM THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE TREATING INDIA AS A NATURAL LEADER OF THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD, THE UK HAS BEEN DEVELOPING A DIALOGUE WITH INDIA, PARTICULARLY IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, TO TRY TO CUT BACK ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE EXTREMISTS SUCH AS CUBA AND ALGERIA. WHILE THE UK RECOGNIZES THAT INDIA WILL STAY WITHIN THE CONSENSUS

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OF THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD, AT LEAST THE INDIANS WILL
RECEIVE THE WEST'S VIEWS MORE SYMPATHETICALLY.

6. DESAI. THE FCO FEELS THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT
OBJECTIVE FOR DESAI SHOULD BE TO MANAGE TO STAY IN
POWER FOR ANOTHER 18 MONTHS TO DEVELOP HIS IDEAS AND
GIVE THE JANATA TIME TO WELD ITSELF TOGETHER. THE FCO
CAN NOT SEE MUCH PROSPECT OF FIRM ECONOMIC POLICIES
COMING OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN THE NEXT SIX
MONTHS. IN THE JANATA NO ONE NOW KNOWS WHO STANDS
WHERE; IF DESAI LEFT THE SCENE IT COULD BE RATHER MESSY.
HE HAS REFUSED TO REGULATE THE PERSONAL PRESSURES ON
HIM. HE SHOULD ORGANIZE HIS OWN LIFE AND HIS SUB-
ORDINATES' STAFF WORK SO AS TO PROLONG HIS LONGEVITY.
HIS BEST PRESENT ADVANTAGE IS THE CURRENT DISARRAY OF
THE CONGRESS PARTY, WHICH HAS SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO
SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF MRS. GHANDI AND REUNITE.

7. O'NEILL, HEAD OF FCO SOUTH ASIA OFFICE, IS PROCEED-
ING TO INDIA FOR BRITISH CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE
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FOR SOUTH ASIA. ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 11 AFTER O'NEILL'S
RETURN, EMBOFF WILL CALL ON HIM TO SEEK FURTHER
POLITICAL ASSESSMENT OF AREA ON BASIS OF CONFERENCE.
DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO SUPPLY US BEFORE THEN WITH
QUESTIONS OR FURTHER POLICY GUIDANCE, PARTICULARLY ANY
GUIDANCE ON US POLICY CONCERNING SUCH MATTERS AS
POSSIBLE BRITISH SALES OF JAGUAR AIRCRAFT TO PAKISTAN
OR INDIA.

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